

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-23 (cancelled)

Claim 24 (currently amended)      A matting agent ~~for thermally curable systems, characterized in that said systems comprise at least one carboxyl-containing polymer as binder and at least one epoxy group-containing compound as cross-linking agent, wherein said matting agent comprises~~ comprising:

(a)      a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony; and

(b)      a polymerisation product of ~~monomers, wherein the monomers include epoxy-group-containing monomers, wherein~~ [[and]] the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is from 1 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is from 0.2 to 120; and wherein said matting agent, when added to a thermally curable system comprising at least one carboxyl-containing polymer as binder and at least one epoxy-group-containing compound as cross-linking agent, produces a matting action.

Claim 25 (cancelled)

Claim 26 (currently amended)      A matting agent ~~for thermally curable systems, characterized in that said systems comprise at least one carboxy-containing polymer as binder and at least one epoxy group-containing compound as cross-linking agent, wherein said matting agent comprises~~ comprising:

(a) a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony; and

(b) a polymerisation product of ~~monomers, wherein the monomers include~~ epoxy-group-containing monomers, wherein [[and]] the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is at least 1.5 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is at least 3.0; and wherein said matting agent, when added to a thermally curable system comprising at least one carboxyl-containing polymer as binder and at least one epoxy-group-containing compound as cross-linking agent, produces a matting action.

Claim 27 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 26, wherein the epoxy value of constituent (b) is from 1.5 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram, and the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is at least 3.5.

Claim 28 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 24, wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is from 0.4 to 30.

Claim 29 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) has an upper limit of 30.

Claim 30 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 26, wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is from 4 to 20.

Claim 31 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, wherein the metal of constituent (a) is selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, aluminium and zinc.

Claim 32 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 31, wherein the metal of constituent (a) is zinc.

Claim 33 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, wherein constituent (a) is a metal salt or a metal complex of a carboxylic acid.

Claim 34 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 33, wherein the carboxylic acid is a mono- or di-carboxylic acid.

Claim 35 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, wherein constituent (a) is a metal salt or a metal complex of a dimeric or oligomeric unsaturated fatty acid.

Claim 36 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 31, wherein the metal salt or complex is selected from the group consisting of aluminium or magnesium stearate, aluminium or zinc acetylacetonate, zinc methacrylate, zinc arachidate, zinc pentachlorothiophenolate [[or]] and zinc 2-benzothiazole thiolate.

Claim 37 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 36, wherein the metal salt or metal complex is zinc 2-benzothiazole thiolate.

Claim 38 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, wherein constituent (b) is selected from the group consisting of glycidyl (meth)acrylate homopolymers and glycidyl (meth)acrylate copolymers, or a mixture of such compounds.

Claim 39 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, wherein constituent (b) includes one or more polymers containing glycidyl ester groups and, optionally, glycidyl ether groups, and having an average molecular weight (Mn) of from 1,000 to 30,000.

Claim 40 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, wherein constituent (b) includes one or more polyglycidyl (meth)acrylate polymers or copolymers having an average molecular weight (Mn) in the range from 1,000 to 30,000.

Claim 41 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 40, wherein the average molecular weight (Mn) is in the range from 2,000 to 15,000.

Claim 42 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, wherein constituent (b) has a glass transition temperature in the range from 20°C to 120°C.

Claim 43 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 42, wherein the glass transition temperature is in the range from 40°C to 100°C.

Claim 44 (currently amended)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, which further comprises constituent (c), a natural or synthetic wax, ~~or wax-like substance having a melting point of at least 50°C.~~

Claim 45 (cancelled)

Claim 46 (cancelled)

Claim 47 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, characterized in that said matting agent is in particle form, and has an average particle size in the range from 0.015 µm to 1000 µm.

Claim 48 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 47, wherein the average particle size is from 5 µm to 500 µm.

Claim 49 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 24, wherein said matting agent is in the form of a solid mixture, wherein constituent (a) is a zinc salt or a zinc complex of an organic compound; and wherein the matting agent optionally comprises a polyolefin wax or a polyethylene wax having a melting point in the range from 50°C to 120°C.

Claim 50 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 49, wherein constituent (a) is a zinc salt of mercaptobenzothiazole.

Claim 51 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 49, wherein constituent (b) is a glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer.

Claim 52 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 51, wherein the glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer has a molecular weight (Mn) in the range of 2,000 to 15,000.

Claim 53 (cancelled)

Claim 54 (cancelled)

Claim 55 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 49, wherein constituent (a) is a zinc salt of mercaptobenzothiazole; constituent (b) is a glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer having a molecular weight (Mn) in the range from 2,000 to 15,000; and further comprising a polyethylene wax having a melting point in the range from 50°C to 120°C.

Claim 56 (previously presented)      The matting agent of any one of claims 49-52 and 55, wherein constituent (b) has from 1.5 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of constituent (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is from 3.5 to 30.

Claims 57-79 (cancelled)

Claim 80 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 44, wherein constituent (c) is present in an amount of from 5% to 30% by weight, based on the total weight of constituents (a), (b) and (c).

Claim 81 (previously presented)      The matting agent of claim 80, wherein constituent (c) is present in an amount of from 10% to 30% by weight, based on the total weight of constituents (a), (b) and (c).

Claim 82 (currently amended)      The matting agent of claim 24 or 26, characterized by the absence of any wax, ~~or wax-like substance having a melting point of at least 50°C.~~

Claim 83 (currently amended)      A thermally curable system comprising:

- (a) a binder comprising at least one carboxyl-containing polymer;
- (b) a cross-linking agent comprising at least one epoxy-group-containing compound; and
- (c) a matting agent ~~according to claim 24~~ comprising:

(i) a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony;

(ii) a polymerisation product of epoxy-group containing monomers, wherein the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is from 1 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram;

wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is from 0.2 to 120; and

(iii) optionally, a natural or synthetic wax.

Claim 84 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the carboxyl-containing polymer is a carboxyl-terminated polyester and/or a carboxyl-containing (meth)acrylate polymer.

Claim 85 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the matting agent is present in an amount of up to 20% by weight based on the total weight of binder and cross-linking agent in the system.

Claim 86 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the matting agent is present in an amount of from 1% to 10% by weight based on the total weight of binder and cross-linking agent in the system.

Claim 87 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the cross-linking agent does not contain any glycidyl esters that have a molecular weight of up to and including 1500.

Claim 88 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the epoxy-group containing compound is a mixture of a diglycidyl compound and a triglycidyl compound.

Claim 89 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 88, wherein the carboxyl-containing polymer is a carboxyl-terminated polyester and/or a carboxyl-containing (meth)acrylate polymer.

Claim 90 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 88, wherein the diglycidyl compound and triglycidyl compound are present in a ratio by weight of from 10:1 to 1:10.

Claim 91 (currently amended)      A thermally curable system, comprising:

- (a) a binder comprising at least one carboxyl-containing polymer;
- (b) a cross-linking agent comprising at least one epoxy-group-containing compound; and
- (c) a matting agent ~~according to claim 26~~ comprising:

(i) a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony;

(ii) a polymerisation product of epoxy-group containing monomers, wherein the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is at least 1.5 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and

wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is at least 3.0; and

(iii) optionally, a natural or synthetic wax.

Claim 92 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 91, wherein the polymerisation product of the matting agent has an epoxy value of from 1.5 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram, and the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of the polymerisation product to metal equivalents of the metal salt or metal complex is at least 3.5.

Claim 93 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the cross-linking agent comprises a glycidyl ester compound having a molecular weight of up to and including 1500.

Claim 94 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the cross-linking agent consists of glycidyl esters having a molecular weight of up to and including 1500, or contains a predominant amount of such glycidyl esters.

Claim 95 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the epoxy-group-containing compound is a mixture of a diglycidyl compound and a triglycidyl compound.

Claim 96 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the diglycidyl compound and triglycidyl compound are present in a ratio by weight of from 10:1 to 1:10.

Claim 97 (previously presented)      The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the mixture of a diglycidyl compound and a triglycidyl compound is a mixture of diglycidyl terephthalate and triglycidyl trimellitate.

Claim 98 (currently amended)      The thermally curable system of claim 83 or 91, wherein constituent (iii) is ~~further comprising constituent (c), a natural or synthetic wax, or wax-like substance having a melting point of at least 50°C, present in an amount of from 5% to 30% by weight based on the total weight of the matting agent constituents (a), (b) and (c).~~



Claim 99 (currently amended)      The thermally curable system of claim 83 or 91, wherein constituent (iii) is further comprising constituent (c), a natural or synthetic wax, or wax-like substance having a melting point of at least 50°C, present in an amount of from 10% to 30% by weight based on the total weight of the matting agent constituents (a), (b) and (c).

Claim 100 (currently amended)      The thermally curable system of claim 83 or 91, characterized by the absence of any wax, ~~or wax-like substance having a melting point of at least 50°C~~.

Claim 101 (previously presented)      A fully cured system according to either of claims 83 or 91.

Claim 102 (previously presented)      A process for coating an article, comprising the steps of applying a thermally curable system according to either of claims 83 or 91 to said article, and curing the system at a temperature of at least 100°C.

Claim 103 (previously presented)      The process of claim 102, wherein the temperature is in the range from 150°C to 250°C.

Claim 104 (new)      A matting agent for thermally curable systems, characterized in that said systems comprise at least one carboxyl-containing polymer as binder and at least one epoxy-group-containing compound as cross-linking agent, wherein said matting agent comprises:

(a)      a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony; and

(b)      a polymerisation product of epoxy-group-containing monomers selected from the group consisting of glycidyl (meth)acrylate homopolymers, glycidyl (meth)acrylate copolymers, and mixtures of such compounds; wherein the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is from

1 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is from 0.2 to 120.

Claim 105 (new)      A matting agent for thermally curable systems, characterized in that said systems comprise at least one carboxyl-containing polymer as binder and at least one epoxy-group-containing compound as cross-linking agent, wherein said matting agent comprises:

- (a)      a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony; and
- (b)      a polymerisation product of epoxy-group-containing monomers selected from the group consisting of glycidyl (meth)acrylate homopolymers, glycidyl (meth)acrylate copolymers, and mixtures of such compounds; wherein the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is at least 1.5 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is at least 3.0.

Claim 106 (new)      The matting agent of claim 104 or 105, wherein constituent (b) includes one or more polyglycidyl (meth)acrylate polymers or copolymers having an average molecular weight (Mn) in the range from 1,000 to 30,000.

Claim 107 (new)      The matting agent of claim 106, wherein the average molecular weight (Mn) is in the range from 2,000 to 15,000.

Claim 108 (new)      The matting agent of claim 104, wherein said matting agent is in the form of a solid mixture, constituent (a) is a zinc salt or a zinc complex of an organic compound; constituent (b) is a glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer; and the matting agent optionally comprises a polyolefin wax or a polyethylene wax having a melting point in the range from 50°C to 120°C.

Claim 109 (new)      The matting agent of claim 108, wherein the glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer has a molecular weight (Mn) in the range of 2,000 to 15,000.

Claim 110 (new)      The matting agent of claim 108, wherein constituent (a) is a zinc salt of mercaptobenzothiazole; constituent (b) is a glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer having a molecular weight (Mn) in the range from 2,000 to 15,000; and further comprising a polyethylene wax having a melting point in the range from 50°C to 120°C.